REMARKS

In paragraph 3 of the Action, the disclosure was object to. In view of the objection, the specification has been amended.
In paragraph 4 of the Action, claims 4 and 8 were objected to. In view of the objection, claims 4 and 8 have been amended.

In paragraphs 6-8 of the Action, claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112. In view of the rejection, claim 3 has been amended.

In paragraphs, 10, 12 and 13 of the Action, claim 1-5 were rejected by the cited references. In paragraph 14 of the Action, claims 6-8 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated allowable if amended to independent form. In view of the rejections and indication of allowance, claim 1 has been amended, and new claims 9 and 10 have been filed. Also, claims 6 and 7 have been amended to independent form. Therefore, claims 6-8 are allowable over the cited references. Also, claim 1 now amended is allowable, as explained below.

In claim 1 now amended, the airbag device comprises, in part, a shape-maintaining component having a first connecting portion connected to the front portion of the airbag, and a second connecting portion attached to a lower part of the retainer for covering the airbag in a folded state so that the one end of the inflator is placed in the insertion port behind the first connecting portion. The shape-maintaining component covers an upper portion of the folded airbag located at said one side of the retainer, and extends from said upper portion to the other side of the retainer to attach and hold the folded airbag to the retainer. Since the shape-maintaining component is used in the invention, the space for the inflator can be created in the folded airbag. Thus, the inflator can be easily mounted to the retainer with the folded airbag. The assembly of the airbag device can be easily made, as well.

In paragraph 10 of the Action, it was held as "a shape-maintaining component 307 having a first connecting portion connected to the front portion of the airbag and a second connecting portion attached to a lower part of the retainer 5 for covering the airbag in a folded state so that the one end of the inflator 8 is placed in the insertion port behind the first connecting portion (Figs. 16A-17 --- see attached annotations)."

In claim 1, now amended, it is defined such that the shape-maintaining component covers an upper portion of the folded airbag located at said one side of the retainer, and extends from said upper portion to the other side of the retainer to attach and hold the folded airbag to the retainer.

The expansion restraining members 307 of Kato et al. referred to as the shape-maintaining components in the Action are attached to the periphery of the air bag 1, and do not cover and hold an upper portion of the folded airbag, as clearly shown in Fig. 16C. Therefore, the expansion restraining member 307 does not constitute the shape-maintaining component of the airbag device now claimed in claim 1.

Claim 1 is not anticipated by Kato et al.

Claim 5 depending from claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) by Kato et al. Since Kato et al. does not disclose or suggest the shape-maintaining component covering the upper portion of the folded airbag and connected to the front portion, claim 5 is not obvious from Kato et al.

In Cheung et al., it was held as "a shape-maintaining component 170 having a first connecting portion 172 connected to the front portion of the airbag and a second connecting portion 174 attached to a lower part of the retainer for covering the airbag in a folded state so that one end of the inflator is placed behind the first connecting portion."

In claim 1, the shape-maintaining component covers an upper portion of the folded airbag located at said one side of the retainer, and extends from said upper portion to the other side of the retainer to attach and hold the folded airbag to the retainer. The tether 170 referred to as the shape-maintaining component in the Action is not shown in Fig. 5. However, the first end 172 is attached to an upper portion 150 of the air bag 144, and the air bag 144 is folded in a form of bellows or pleats. Therefore, the tether 170 does not cover an upper portion of the folded airbag. Especially, the tether 170 does not attach and hold the folded airbag to the retainer, as recited in claim 1 now amended.

In Igawa et al., an inflator 108 is attached to a retainer 102 so that the inflator 108 is located at a bottom of the airbag 106. However, Igawa et al. does not have any shape-maintaining component, as used in the invention.

When Cheung et al. and Igawa et al. are referred to, the retainer of Cheung et al. may have the insertion port of Igawa et al. However, such combination does not constitute the invention. The tether 170 of Cheung et al. does not constitute the shape-maintaining component of claim 1. Claim 1 is not obvious from Cheung et al. and Igawa et al.

As explained above, claims now pending in the application are patentable over the cited references.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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